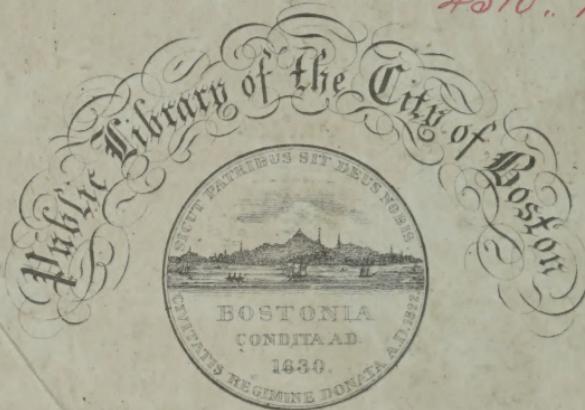




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By Abbott Lawrence.

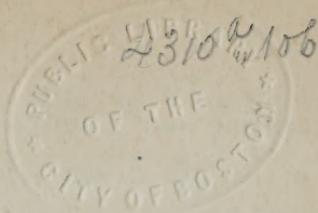
Received Dec. 2, 1862. Vast 437



GREEN-BACK

TO HIS

Country Friends.



New York, June 20, 1862.

To the Constituents of the 37th Congress, now
assembled in Washington—

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My dear Friends:—

In common with the rest of mankind, I am naturally anxious about the human race, and especially ourselves; for that reason I have for some time contemplated addressing you upon general matters, but more especially upon our duties as constituents to our representatives in congress assembled, and which I now reluctantly do, and upon conviction that it is necessary for the benefit of all, that there should be a more definite understanding between the represented and representors. From the time of the assembling of this 37th Congress in December last, you cannot have overlooked with what care and attention certain interests have been looked after, and, in many sections of the country, the amiable deportment and kind attention of members must have carried joy to many a patriotic expectant. The war, now unfortunately de-

vastating our country, has added many burdens to our already overweighted representatives; when we consider the many Brigadiers and Sutlers that were to be appointed, and the difficulty of placing contracts in such a way as to yield to the contractors the largest returns; the endeavors, of individual members, to blacken each other's reputations, have not been without their adequate returns, and the quiet shelving of reports, censuring men in office, picturesquely contrasts with the well-merited brand of infamy with which those who have lost official position have been visited. The establishment of Free Academies, in South Carolina, to develop the superior intelligence of our hitherto oppressed sable brethren, and the endeavors on the other hand, of the representative of federal power in North Carolina, to check the too rapid development of negro superiority, alike give rise to many additional anxieties to which our representatives are subjected. The emancipation of the negro one day and the returning him to bondage another, and in fact the general care of that most important of all men, the "black man" leaves but little time unemployed upon the hands of our representatives; and of course and doubtless, innocently enough, interests that many consider important are overlooked. In view of this state of affairs, I for one have to record my most

hearty thanks that some of our heads of departments have, within their own families and among their private friends, controlled the talent and peculiar fitness for the carrying on of their respective departments; thus leaving to "congress men" their valuable time for maturing plans for the full development of their much admired and more beloved "Congo men." Let it for a moment be borne in mind what would have been the position of that branch of the service if (guided alone by congressional authority) the Secretary had not fortunately discovered that, to purchase a certain description of property, it was first essentially necessary not to have had the contamination of previous knowledge of the business; see with what cleverness technicalities, which sometimes retard business, may be overcome; as for instance a man who has always been upon the water looks with anxiety to the discovery of "dry rot" in his ship, whereas, to one of a less saline experience, the presence of this peculiarity is the evidence of what is most desired, a "dry ship," (as how could it be possible for a vessel to rot dry that was not dry,) thus avoiding the infection of our troops with rheumatic pains and such other ills as might be engendered by vessels not having such evidence of peculiar fitness for their transportation. Then again, with what grateful remembrance should we hold those

devoted men who, abandoned their regular avocations, rushed from their literary pleasures and placed at the disposal of our then War Secretary, their best services; and, to ensure that a grateful country should not even have the chance to make a proper amend for such herculean services, the very evidences of their labors are not forthcoming, as doubtless such modest merit will not consent that the country be made aware of the debt of gratitude that is due to these deserving individuals.

Those gentlemen of the Press, to whom our war department it seems are most indebted for not only creating the war but carrying it on, are and have been most assiduous in their endeavours to conduct it according to their own views, though at no time has it been discovered, I believe, notwithstanding the differences of opinion as to the conduct of the war, but that some enlightened member of the press could opportunely suggest where a contract might be appropriately placed. These little episodes, as episodes they are, compared with the real object of my addressing you at this moment, will at least serve to show you how well your interests are looked after and if, by chance through overcrowding cares, your representative fail to meet your expectation, a special providence or I should say a special correspondent or an editorial con-

tributor is near at hand to supply the deficiency caused by the congressional delinquency. Under any circumstances, my dear friends, you will see the country is in no jeopardy, in fact, it may be considered positively safe, provided you in the mean time give your attention to some little matters that seem to have escaped the attention of your representatives. Among these little matters that appear to me as interesting to us and which appear to have escaped the serious attention of our representatives, I may mention Finance, Tariff, Taxes, in themselves hitherto unimportant branches of our government but now becoming more prominent on account of the large expenditure necessary for the maintenance of the government and care of those who are willing to serve that government in any capacity. Finance is by name familiar to us all and each of us doubtless considers himself the fittest man to provide for the wants of a nation as it only requires the recommendation of the chief of the Exchequer to obtain the general approval and, when obtained, success is certain, as it follows of course that "what every body does must be right." To our Secretary, the recommendations in his report last winter, are doubtless to be credited; and his then distinct condemnation of the issue of paper money by the government was the result of his matured opin-

ions on that subject, after an incubation of nine months. His discussions on the subject at least shewed candor if not a mastery of the subject, and his conclusions were the condemnation of that position which circumstances or the non-anticipation of circumstances afterwards forced him to adopt. For this amiability of character the secretary is entitled to our kind consideration; where can we find another instance on record of an official of high position so entirely abandoning his own grounds, and so ardently adopting those views he had so recently and positively condemned? 'Tis true nobility to confess our faults and turn from our errors. But still more strange and more remarkably magnanimous, than this sudden conversion, is the recent development of the desire of our worthy secretary to carry out, to its fullest extent, the experiment of paper money, purely and simply; as, by his recent request, he asks for authority to issue \$150,000,000 more of these beautiful pictures and, as if anticipating a still very much larger business, he proposes a manufactory, at the seat of government, where he expects to do the work with less cost to the government, on account of the large amount to be done, and with neatness and despatch. The argument, in the present official mind, for a further issue of paper money, is doubtless based

upon arithmetical progression, and the result anticipated, without doubt, is as surely relied upon, for how could it be otherwise; if \$150,000,000 have done much unexpected good, twice that sum would doubtless in compound proportion increase our felicity, until, if only the war will continue and thus find a demand for this sort of money, every hamlet will become practically acquainted with finance and admiringly see how much easier it is for people to pay their debts with promises than with vulgar realities, and particularly when these pretty etchings are made on the premises and can be turned out to any amount. What chancellor of the Exchequer, before this eventful period blessed us with our present incumbent, ever discovered that the shadow was equal to the substance or, if convinced himself, ever expected the people to believe it? That we may be the more sensible of the skill with which our finances have been managed, and of the plentiful supply of money that we are likely to have for the future, (as indicated by this last development,) it will be as well to review the able report of December 1861, of our Financial Colossus. In speaking of the issue of demand notes payable in coin on demand, I find as follows.

“The plan, however, is not without inconvenience and hazard. The temptation, especially in times of

“pressure and danger, to issue notes without adequate provision for redemption,” &c. &c.; further, “The risk of a depreciated and depreciating and finally worthless paper money, the innumerable evils of dis honored public faith and national bankruptcy; all these are possible consequences of the adoption of a system of government circulation. It may be said, “and perhaps truly, that they are less deplorable than those of an irredeemable bank circulation; without entering into that comparison the secretary contents himself with observing that in his judgment these possible disasters so far outweigh the probable benefits of the plan, that he feels himself constrained to forbear recommending its adoption.” I also find in the honorable secretary’s report as follows: “The circulation of the Banks of the United States on the 1st January, 1861, was computed to be \$202,000,767; of this circulation, \$150,000,000 in round numbers, was in States now loyal, including West Virginia, and \$50,000,000 in rebellious States,” &c., &c.

Now, my dear friends, you will see with what thoroughness matters have been investigated. The entire bank circulation has been ascertained even to that seven hundred and sixty-seven and odd, and it was at that time decided that it was not even safe to displace that \$202,000,767 of Bank Currency, and replace it by

United States currency, payable on demand in coin, for fear of depreciation, &c., &c.; but to show an entire freedom of thought as well as of action, and our total indifference to our own opinions, our Secretary, finding his own plans too difficult to carry out and still wishing the country to retain his valuable services, did what many other chancellors of the exchequer have done before, that is, not being able to carry out his own views, adopted those of others, and is now running riot with the people, and seems inclined to make matters as easy as possible, so long as paper money will accomplish the object; such a course may be amiable and gain applause for the moment, and if it should turn out that he has not made some slight mistakes, he may yet prove a great financier; in fact, some of the papers say he is already; but what think you? has he not, by the desire to issue another \$150,000,000 say \$300,000,000 in all, and may be \$600,000,000 or more as the contemplated establishment of a manufactory at Washington indicates, adopted too much of the science and discarded on the other hand too much of the realities of finance; of course, I do not pretend to say he is not right, nor, as an outsider, do I pretend to know or have a right to know anything, but in contrasting our Secretary's own figures, matters look a little queer to my unofficial vision—as for instance,

on \$202,000,767 prior to the war, we did a very large and good business, we have issued \$150,000,000 as a financial war measure, and the banks have out their full previous circulation, and seem also vieing to emulate their uncle, and to all this must we add the other \$150,000,000, asked for by our Secretary? If it must be so, dear friends, there is no mistake about it, we are going to have a jolly time. If our Secretary shall throw out every few days an additional \$150,000,000 of demand notes, the crop of money this year promises to be as plentiful as strawberries, which, it is well known, are exceedingly abundant this season, and before we get through, the money, we are likely to have, will be just as cheap; therefore, do not give yourselves any anxiety, the country is safe, only consider, however, if one little modification of the programme would not possibly tend to give a little more stability to our financial movements for the future. Is not paper better used as an "eccentric" to the financial engine, than as the "shaft" to drive the whole fabric? Is it not possible to issue too much paper notwithstanding the issue of some has answered well? An addition of \$150,000,000 of paper money to a previous aggregate of \$202,000,767 of circulation, which latter was alone deemed sufficient before the war, and with much larger commercial transactions then than now, causes the com-

pound amount to appear, to my moderate comprehension, to be almost sufficient financial stimulant; wherefore is it not worthy of consideration whether this second \$150,000,000 proposed by our worthy Secretary may not make us drunk? If, to the astute minds of our financial Solons, an excess of money will force investments in United States stocks, I would beg to suggest that such logic might fail in its general application; in some cases, on account of the inability of people to make long investments, in others through delay in expectation, by waiting, to get the last edition, "as newspapers are bought," and thus secure the handsomest and newest, and may be the cheapest notes, for, according to all previous experience, as things get plentiful they do get cheaper. Has it occurred to you, that the more economical plan for the nation would be to make United States stocks a good security, based upon the sure payment of interest by taxes, and thus induce people to invest in them, because they believed them good, rather than be forced to invest in them because they were considered less worthless than the demand notes are likely to become? I, among others, fully believe in and approve the issue of an amount of paper by the government, if judiciously done, but rather less than in excess of enough, as it is no easy matter to draw back when once put

out, or to raise it in public estimation when once disgraced. Whereas a proved deficiency can always be corrected, so long as engravers can be had. Is not one hundred and fifty to two hundred per cent. increase of circulation, in less than six months, rather more than even our enterprise can manage judiciously?

Those wild animals the Bulls and Bears no doubt hold contrary opinions on this and many other subjects and give themselves but little anxiety so long as they are well fed and well treated, but our Bulls will not like to see what they term "fancy stock" so fall, in public estimation, as to become unsaleable, through default of dividends, and become forced out of market entirely, as people may be compelled to invest in government securities to secure an income to live on; for, with this plethora of paper money, many will have to provide for an increase of revenue, because everything will be so very dear, that none will have money to invest in unproductive securities except at a very low price. The Bears, on the other hand, might look upon such a state of affairs with complacency till perhaps the Bulls were no more and the Bears had exhausted their paws.

That hateful word, Taxes, is, my dear friends, after all, the stumbling block, and it is the most earnest desire of your representatives to please you that prevents

them from taxing such interests as will yield the surest and most economical revenue. Your representatives do not wish, by any act of theirs, to run the risk of being prevented from serving you in the thirty-eighth Congress and for that reason they hesitate to tax you.

It will, I fear, require some encouragement from you that they shall be retained in the service, before they can bring themselves to the revolting idea of taxing the very people who have bestowed upon them their places, and through whose kindness they get their \$3,000 per annum, beside their being under the grateful sense of favors yet to be realized. Each member, you will see, seems willing to tax another member's district, but for his own peculiar locality any particular tax seems hardly applicable. In looking over the tax bill, it is apparent that articles of large and general consumption escape with a very slight notice, while certain interests in our city are very heavily burdened, and will be almost annihilated. A merchant's business appears to be trammeled, in innumerable ways, and with more of a desire to derange business than to collect revenue, and my beloved city is made to bear almost the entire burden of the Tax Bill, as if already she had not placed her entire resources at the command of the government. Pig iron, you will notice, is not considered a "manufacture," and es-

capes taxation, but Townsend's Sarsaparilla, and articles of that kind, are exemplarily taxed. Beer, another article of considerable familiarity with our taxable citizens, is let off with an excise of one dollar per barrel of 31 gallons, or say one quarter cent per glass. This article, it must be borne in mind, is consumed under pleasant emotions, and it would appear to me that a confirmed admirer of the hop beverage would much prefer contributing his ratio of tax through the medium of his "Lager," than to have his home searched by his "Uncle's" clerk to ascertain if he was the possessor of Brandreth's pills or other alteratives. The much-loved article of Whisky, also, may be considered a specially favored interest, and must, I conclude, be in good repute in all congressional districts, as no member seems inclined to permit the article to be oppressively dealt by; for the low tax of 20 cents per gallon seems very generally approved by our legislators, and by computation it will be seen that this is equivalent to one third of a cent per glass; or as it takes about two glasses of "Red Eye" to one drunk, it requires an individual to contribute just two thirds of a cent to Uncle Samuel's support to be quite happy and elevated; certainly, at this rate, taxation will not interfere with some pleasures. That inestimable narcotic, Tobacco, also, has the kindly consideration of our

representatives as indeed it deserved, for both representatives and constituents are probably personally interested in it to a greater extent than even Whiskey ; but would it not be well to consider if a little heavier contribution for the preservation of its nationality might be afforded ? As the Tax now stands it may be cyphered out as follows, say 20c. per lb., or 1 1-4c. per paper on fine cut, or say not quite two-fifths of a mill per chew. Might it not possibly taste better (at least to the true patriot) if the happy consumer, when parting with his saliva, knew that at the same time he was also more liberally contributing to Uncle's support than at the rate of 20c. per lb., thus combining pleasure with duty ?

In the way of suggestion, how would it answer, friends, for our Uncle to intrust the State Authorities with the collection of his taxes? it might save us from the acquaintance of many inquiring friends in the shape of Federal tax-gatherers, and possibly might be done with but little additional expense, as the State has already its tax machinery. It would, I know, disappoint many who are expecting to serve the government, but doubtless they will become reconciled, as this is an age of abnegation. As to Tariff I will speak with you another day, though I would if I were secretary raise it before all the specie was gone. Though

it may be that our secretary is waiting 'till the merchants are compelled to import, and then raise the Tariff and catch them on the voyage, which, would be almost equal to the late negotiation of 7 30s. for specie, which the papers say was entirely successful.

In conclusion I beg you will remember that, so long as you do not get too many, the demand notes are just what you want, but, when you do get too many of them, they will be just what you do not want, as is proved by the old adage of "too much of a good thing;" so you had better write to your representatives not to be too lavish in putting out these documentary evidences of money, but to tax Iron, Whisky, Beer, Coal, Tobacco and various articles of large consumption much higher than they propose, and to make all taxes as simple as possible and on as few articles as possible and farm out the collection of them to the States if it be practicable and thus save 20 per cent in the collection, besides the insolence of new fledged officials; also tell them that they seem thus far to have overlooked the landed interest which possibly might not wish to be entirely excluded from the Tax Bill. As a last word I would also beg to suggest that the Secretary of the Treasury's plea of necessity is no valid excuse for his springing upon us this last \$150,000,000, of legal tender as if he had neglected his duty to make

provision for the future during the last six months; he ought to yield up his financial Ghost and not in attempting to manage what he does not understand render our future existence intolerable. I would also remark that, if the periodical issue of paper money without security be the proper management of the finances of a great Nation, it might be that a lawyer of less distinguished ability at a lower price could be employed to make these timely suggestions in the place of the present able incumbent.

I remain as ever your most devoted friend,

GREEN-BACK.

